DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 234 725 HE 016 682

TITLE	A Short History of the Relationship Between the Educational Laboratories, the Research and Development Centers, and the National Institute of Education.
INSTITUTION	National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	Jul 78
NOTE	15p.; For related documents, see ED 112 473, HE 016 673-685, and HE 016 689.
PUB TYPE	Historical Materials (060)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Agency Role; Coordination; Educational Development; *Educational History; Educational Research; Federal Aid; Federal Government; *Government Role; Higher Education; Institutional Characteristics; Organizational Objectives; Program Development; *Regional Laboratories; *Research and Development Centers
IDENTIFIERS	National Institute of Education; *NIE R and D Centers and Regional Educational Labs

ABSTRACT

Background information on the relationship between educational laboratories, research and development (R&D) centers, and the National Institute of Education (NIE) is presented. Attention is directed to: (1) the authorizing legislation for and the subsequent creation of the laboratories and centers; (2) a chronology of selected major events affecting the laboratories and centers from their inception in the mid-1960s to July 1978; (3) a description of the labs and centers currently funded by NIE and of the Council for Educational Development and Research; and (4) NIE's organizational structure for coordinating lab and center activities and the current status of the process being used to define and develop institutional relationships between individual labs/centers and NIE. A 1978 analysis showed that both laboratories and centers vary in the degree of coherence of their mission statements, management structures, the percentage of their total funding coming from NIE, the range of research topics they address, and the types of activities they conduct. Information is provided for eight laboratories and nine centers on the year established, location, institutional status, governance and policy structure, mission, areas of concentration, and projects underway with NIE funding. An annotated bibliography is appended. (SW)

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A SHORT HISTORY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE EDUCATIONAL LABORATORIES, THE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTERS, AND THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

National Institute of Education
Office of Planning & Program Development
July 1978

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I. INTRODUCTION

This paper, prepared for the use of the Office of Planning and Program Development staff, is intended to provide background information on the relationship between the educational laboratories, the research and development centers, and the National Institute of Education. The information included is in summary form, with a selected annotated bibliography attached at the end for readers wishing to study the events in greater depth.

The areas covered in the paper are:

1. the authorizing legislation for and the subsequent creation of the labs and centers;

2. a chronology of selected major events affecting the labs and/or centers from their inception to July 1978;

3. a description of the labs and centers currently funded by NIE and of the Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR), a consortium representing most of these labs and centers; and

4. NIE's organizational structure for coordinating activities relating to the labs and centers and the current status of the process being used to define and develop institutional relationships between individual labs/centers and NIE.

II. BACKGROUND

Although the functions have become somewhat blurred over time, the educational labs and the research and development centers were created to fulfill different purposes.

A. The Laboratories

The twenty original laboratories were created by the U.S.O.E. in 1966 under the authority of the Cooperative Research Act as amended by Title IV of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (attach. 1). These labs were to be (1) independent, nonprofit institutions; (2) regionally distributed and oriented, with programs based on locally determined needs of the region; and (3) multi-disciplinary, with functions to include research, development, dissemination, training, and technical assistance to schools. The task force that originally framed the idea of the labs intended to create a "small number of high-quality national laboratories comparable to those of the Atomic Energy Commission, and perhaps with other features similar to some of the clinical facilities of the National Institutes of Health." [1]

[1] R&D Funding Policies of the National Institute of Education: Review and Recommendations. Final report of consultants to the Director and the National Council on Educational Research, August 1975, p. 21.

B. The Centers

The eleven original university-based centers were funded by the U. S. O. E. between 1964-1969 under the authority of the 1954 Cooperative Research Act (P. L. 83-531, attach. 2). Each center was to: (1) mount programmatic attacks on a major problem area over an extended period of time; and (2) conduct research, surveys, and demonstrations in the field of education.

III. CHRONOLOGY OF SELECTED MAJOR EVENTS

Since the inception of the labs and centers, a variety of events has affected their development and influenced the relations between the labs/centers and NIE. During much of their lifetime, labs and centers have been treated as a unit ("labs/centers"), and events originally concerning only one group often ended up involving both. The following is a chronology of selected major events, with the significance of each event noted:

1966 — Under the authority of Title IV, mentioned earlier, the U. S. O. E. supported the construction of facilities to house 3 centers and 4 labs, at a cost of $30,758,000. These monies plus the program budgets for all of the labs and centers represented an enormous federal investment, reflecting U. S. O. E.'s view that creation of and support for institutional R&D was a major priority.

late 1960's — The labs and centers were given a great deal of autonomy in determining research priorities, objectives, and functions, with a single contract being negotiated with each institution. [2] Questions arose almost immediately concerning the labs' goals, quality of work, and management, and the centers' missions, failure to secure enough scientists outside schools of education, and their insufficient work in development. In response to these concerns, U. S. O. E. initiated a policy shift requiring the labs/centers to build the capability to engage in product development. Because the institutions were so autonomous, it was difficult to direct their resources at either the Commissioner's priorities or to "priorities held by higher levels of the Executive Branch or Congress." [3]

early 1970's — When the U. S. O. E.'s appropriations did not rise as anticipated, U. S. O. E. terminated nine laboratories, ending the regional nature of the laboratory network. By 1971, 3 centers had also been terminated by U. S. O. E.

1971 — U. S. O. E. embarked on an "Institutional Maturity" policy that changed the relationship with the labs/centers from one of institutional support to one of program-purchase

[2] R&D Funding Policies of the National Institute of Education: Review and Recommendations, p. 22 and Background Report on the "Labs and Centers," prepared by NIE staff for the NCER, March 5, 1975, p. 5.

[3] Background Report on the "Labs and Centers", pp. 4-5.

(i.e. government would purchase specific programs of work, using separate contracts for each, rather than working under a single contract with each institution).

1972 U. S. O. E. initiated an internal review of the lab and center programs in order to determine which programs would receive continuation contracts. The review utilized about 70 consultants and consisted of 7 subpanels to examine substantive areas and a Master Panel to oversee the review process.

1972 P. L. 92-318 (the General Education Provisions Act of 1972) was passed, creating the National Institute of Education to, among other things, build "an effective research and development system" (20 USC 1221e).

Responsibility for government management of National Center for Educational Research and Development activities at the labs/centers was transferred to NIE at the end of July 1972. At the time of the transfer, the funds committed to the labs/centers amounted to about 1/3 of the Institute's annual appropriation (about $48 million).

NIE established a Task Force on Lab-Center Transition to provide management support to continue the review initiated earlier that year and to oversee the implementation of the program purchase policy initiated by U. S. O. E. NIE's stance was to honor existing contractual obligations and to proceed with the implementation of the program purchase policy.

The Master Panel of the U. S. O. E. -initiated review made its final recommendations, rating each of the lab/center programs on "technical quality" and "educational significance." Of the 68 programs reviewed, 24 were given contracts for one year or less; 23 were given 3-year contracts; 4 were given 2-year contracts; 11 were to be phased out; 1 was to be given a 1-year contract using FY 72 funds; and 5 were declared "new starts" and ruled out of consideration. [4] The programs funded were assigned to NIE administrative units for management and contract negotiations (rather than being assigned to a central lab/center program, as had been the case at U. S. O. E.). NIE's stance was that, except for the contracts agreed to in November 1972, there was no longer to be a special relationship guaranteeing future institutional support between the government and the educational labs/centers.

[4] Background Report on the "Labs and Centers", p. 10.

The program purchase policy would require labs/centers to compete with other institutions for NIE's research dollars. Three additional labs closed during or as a result of the review.

1972-1973 The Government Accounting Office conducted a review of the labs/centers that focused on the products developed. The report from this review criticized the evaluation processes used for, and the marketability and dissemination of, many lab/center products. Recommendations to NIE included establishing specific objectives for lab/center products; establishing product short- and long-term evaluation processes; demonstrating the products' marketability; and developing alternative means of disseminating products.

FY 1974 1975 1976 In FY 1974, the Administration requested $188 million for NIE and received an appropriation of $75.7 million. Despite this reduction, NIE was able to meet all comitments made to the labs and centers. In FY 1975, the request was $134 million and the appropriation $70 million, necessitating a reduction in the lab/center contracts of about 15%. Other program continuations, however, were cut by about 21% and new starts were virtually eliminated. In FY 1976, the appropriation was $80 million. Funding for the labs and centers amounted to about 37% of NIE's FY 76 appropriations.

(By March 1975, NIE program support at 2 additional centers had ended.)

1975 NIE's National Council on Educational Research commissioned ten consultants, led by Roald Campbell, to study and make recommendations about alternate policies that NIE might adopt to support and improve the nation's education R&D institutions. The final report of this review, (the "Campbell Report") included the following recommendations: (1) that NIE adopt a long-range goal of assuming the majority of support for a small number of large, high-quality R&D organizations; (2) that these organizations should share certain features including a single mission closely tied to one of NIE's national R&D priority areas; stable funding for 3-5 years at a level of at least $3-4 million per year with the funding coming chiefly from NIE; and maintenance of close ties with NIE, including the conduct of regular reviews by NIE; (3) that NIE review and revise its policies of supporting a relatively large number of special institutions of diverse quality, inconsistently related to NIE priorities; and (4) that existing labs and centers be considered for the new relationship with NIE after systematic and detailed reviews have been conducted.

The report states that the special relationship with NIE would be "reserved for highly focussed work of direct relevance to NIE. . . . The consequence of this recommendation may mean that some institutions actually close, or must reorient their work away from R&D in areas supported by NIE." [5]

1976 In response to the consultants' report, the NCER passed Resolution 18 as amended declaring (1) that special institutional relationships for education R&D would be established with a limited number of highly qualified institutions; (2) that existing labs and centers would be considered candidates for special institutional relationships; (3) that NIE should conduct extensive and periodic reviews of the labs/centers, focusing on their 3-5 year institutional capability and program capacity, to help strengthen them and produce the best match between Institute programs and lab/center expertise; and (4) that the protection thus established for the labs/centers would last through FY 1980 at which time those labs/centers "for which no 'special institutional relationships' have been defined will be eligible to receive funds from NIE on the same basis as other non-profit organizations." [6]

1976 P.L. 94-483 (the Education Amendments of 1976) passed, reauthorizing NIE for three years and specifying that the labs/centers must (1) submit proposals (Sect. 405(f)(2)); and (2) prepare long-range (3-5 years) plans (Sect. 405(f)(2)(C)(ii)) prior to NIE's issuing a grant or contract under subsection 405(f). The amendments also mandated the establishment of a Panel for the Review of Laboratory and Center Operations which would: (1) review and make recommendations on the long-range plans submitted by the labs/centers; (2) review the operations of the lab/centers and make recommendations both for their individual continuation and improvement and for the support of new labs/centers; and (3) make a final report containing these recommendations to the Director of NIE and to Congress by Jan. 1, 1979 (Sect. 405(f)(3)).

1977 NIE solicited long-range (3-5 year) plans from the existing 17 labs and centers. This solicitation

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5 R&D Funding Policies of the National Institute of Education: Review and Recommendations, p. 81.

6 Official Solicitation of Long-Range Plans from Labs & Centers. NIE, March 25, 1977, Appendix A, pp. 3-4.

expressed NIE's special commitment to the labs/centers as demonstrated by: (1) the unique process whereby the labs/centers were the only institutions requested to submit 3-5 year plans; (2) the assurance that the labs/centers would continue to receive NIE support while strengthening their institutions and planning and implementing projects through Sept. 30, 1980; and (3) the understanding that the approved long-range plans and proposals would lead to special institutional relationships lasting up to 5 years. The long-range plans were to be examined by NIE staff and by the Panel for the Review of Laboratory and Center Operations. NIE's Director requested that the Panel review the plans and prepare an Interim Report by January 1978 regarding:

- o the quality of the plans and the staff and the capability of the lab or center to carry them out;
- o in all instances whether the quality of specific components of the plan are deserving of potential support;
- o whether a lab or center submitting plans should or should not be requested to submit a proposal for special long-term institutional agreement as an R&D Center or Regional Educational Laboratory;
- o whether a lab or center submitting plans for programmatic R&D support but which is not yet ready to meet the requirements for a special long-term institutional agreement should be requested to submit a proposal for continued planning and development to the point where it may qualify for such an institutional identity;
- o in all instances whether the quality of specific components of the plan are deserving of potential support;
- o in all instances whether there are specific steps that the NIE should take to improve the quality of a lab or center; and
- o in all instances whether the NIE should continue to fund a lab or center beyond FY 78 or whether the NIE should consider it in the national interest to notify the institution that its unique relationship to NIE is in serious jeopardy beyond FY 78, if the deficiencies cannot be remedied within one year. [7]

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[7] Official Solicitation of Long-Range Plans from Labs & Centers, p. 11.

1978 After reviewing the long-range plans and conducting interviews with NIE staff and lab/center directors and selected staff, the Panel submitted an Interim Report giving general impressions about (1) the relevance of the individual missions proposed; (2) the apparent ability of individual labs/centers to carry out their plans; (3) the appropriateness of individual lab/center governance and mangement structures; and (4) the presence and seriousness of issues common to most of the labs/centers. The Panel recommended that NIE negotiate long-term relationships with 15 of the 17 institutions and recommended that NIE provide planning support for the remaining two (CERAS and McREL). The Panel also defined problem areas for its further study during the coming year, including making recommendations about the details of the relationships between NIE and individual labs/centers, appropriate funding levels for individual institutions, and the worthiness of specific projects. The Panel, however, stressed the immediate need for NIE to work out an institutional basis for its relationship with each of the labs/centers because "NIE's 'program purchase policy' has had a debilitating effect on the development of the labs and centers and . . . their potential contributions cannot really even be tested until NIE begins to deal with them, and they have had a chance to perform, as institutions." [8]

1978 The lab/centers submitted proposals for 18-month grants, all but one of which (NCHEMS)* would begin on June 1, 1978. The 18-month period was to allow time for the Panel to look more closely at each institution's objectives and capabilities, including conducting site visits to each lab/center, and report again to NIE and the Congress by Jan. 1, 1979. This time would also allow NIE to refine procedures for working with each institution as an entity rather than as a group of unrelated projects. Proposals were reviewed by NIE staff and, in most cases, by peer reviewers to determine whether there were projects that needed strengthening and, if so, how this could be accomplished. The 18-month grants began on June 1.

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[8] Interim Report to the Director of NIE: Review of Long-Range Plans of the Educational Laboratories and the Research and Development Centers. The Panel for the Review of Laboratory and Center Operations, Jan. 20, 1978, p. 5.

* NCHEMS has a 3-year contract with NIE. The second year of the contract ends Sept. 30, 1978.

IV. DESCRIPTION OF THE LABS AND CENTERS

A. Current Situation

NIE is currently funding 8 labs and 9 centers (see Table 1, attch. 3). These labs/centers are engaged in a variety of activities, ranging from basic research to product development and dissemination. Neither labs nor centers are homogenous groups. They vary in the degree of coherence of their mission statements, in their management structures, in the percentage of thier total funding coming from NIE, in the range of research topics they address, and in the types of activities they conduct. The 1975 Campbell Report describe the differences between labs and between centers:

> "The nine present R&D centers have a range of work underway, from heavy concentration on development and marketing of products, to more detached work to understand educational activities. They vary, also, in the degree of emphasis on a common mission within the center. . . ." 9

> ". . . the seven current laboratories differ enormously from each other, and the specific work they were contracted to do after the 1972 review reflects this diversity, as it was largely based on what had gone before. So we find laboratories at present varied in their sense of what schools and students need, in their internal governance and policy-making, in their ties to their region, the degree of emphasis on service to the local schools nearby, in the balance of functions performed such as research, development, dissemination or evaluation , and in the degree of programmatic coherence and mission emphasis. Also, they differ in their current degree of dependence on the NIE" 10

The most current review of the lab/centers as institutions was conducted by the Panel for the Review of Laboratory and Center Operations, with the results submitted in the Jan. 1978 Interim Report. This Report identified the following general problem areas: (1) blurring of the distinction of functions between labs and centers; (2) conflict between NIE staff persons and representatives of the labs and centers; (3) questions about whether educational issues most pertinent to practitioners were being addressed; (4) overlapping and duplication of work; and (5) equal employment and affirmative action issues.

Table 1 (attch. 3) provides information about each of the existing labs and centers in the following areas: year established; location; institutional status; governance and policy structure; mission; areas of concentration; and projects underway with NIE funding. Attachment 4 lists NIE's FY 78 and 79 funding for each lab and center.

9 R&D Funding Policies of the National Institute of Education: Review and Recommendations, p. 18.

10 R&D Funding Policies of the National Institue of Education: Review and Recommendations, p. 23.

B. CEDaR

Founded in 1969 (according to Northwest Lab's summary of The Regional Laboratory Connection) or in 1971 (according to CEDaR's brochure), the Council for Educational Development and Research (CEDaR) consists of members which are either university-based research and development centers or regional educational laboratories. According to CEDaR's brochure, two basic goals guide the Council's ongoing efforts: "/to/ advance the level of programmatic, institutionally based educational research and development and /to/ help demonstrate the importance of that research and development in improving education in this country."

> The Campbell Report states that, "the strongest organized voice in the environment at present is the consortium consisting of most regional educational laboratories and research and development centers . . . The group has lobbied vigorously in Congress and with the other associations for explicit legislative direction to be given to NIE to continue their work. Pressure on the House of Representatives resulted in a direct earmark of NIE's fiscal 1976 appropriation for the laboratories and centers, but even greater pressure on the Senate resulted in less restrictive language. And, in the service of their undenied self-interest, this group of institutions has been almost single-handedly telling the story of education R&D on Capitol Hill." [11]

Of the 17 labs/centers funded by NIE, all but NCHEMS are members of CEDaR. Two centers not funded by NIE are members of CEDAR: High/Scope, Ypsilanti, Michigan; and Network, Andover, Massachusetts.

V. NIE

A. Organizational Changes

Within NIE, several steps have been taken to better coordinate activities relating to the labs/centers. In the 1978 reorganization, an Educational Organization and Institutions staff was established as part of the Director's Office and given responsibilities that include coordinating the execution of Institute policies with respect to the educational laboratories and centers by (1) serving as a contact point for the labs and centers in their institutional relationship with the Institute; (2) advising the Director on the status of the laboratories and centers; and (3) recommending appropriate Institute policies and coordinating Institute monitoring and staff review of laboratories' and centers' research programs (NIE Reorganization Plan, pp. 64-65).

[11] R&D Funding Policies of the National Institute of Education: Review and Recommendations, p. 35.

In addition, 17 NIE staff have been assigned to the newly-created position of Institutional Monitor. Each Institutional Monitor will be responsible for coordinating the activities of a specific lab or center as a total institution (as distinct from Project Officers who will continue to monitor individual projects). The details of the Institutional Monitors' responsibilities are still being refined, but it is generally agreed that they will help serve the goal of maintaining consistency among projects at a single institution and between institutions. Attachment 5 is a listing of the current Institutional Monitor assignments.

B. Current Situation

During July-September 1978, NIE, the Panel, the labs and centers, and NCER will be discussing what should be the nature of long-term institutional relationships with the existing labs and centers and/or with new organizations. The discussion will cover the criteria and procedures for awarding these relationships. The suggested criteria (attachment 6) came from earlier Panel discussions, Hendrick Gedeonse's February 10 memo to the Panel, discussions within NIE during the past few months, NIE's experience in other reviews, and discussions with the lab and center Directors. NIE will further develop the criteria by August 18 when they will again be reviewed and discussed by the Panel, the labs and centers, and NCER. Final criteria and procedures will be completed by September 30, 1978.

The timetable of activities related to making decisions about long-term special institutional relationships is as follows:

1. Throughout the 18-month grant period

   - o NIE and labs and centers will continue 2-way communication about plans and work;
   - o NIE will review labs' and centers' work at appropriate, agreed-upon points;
   - o NIE and labs and centers will re-examine the 5-year plans already submitted to determine whether they should be revised;
   - o NIE will continue planning for future fiscal years, involving the labs and centers at appropriate points; and
   - o The Panel will continue its analyses and submit its report in January 1979.

2. Between September 30, 1978 and August 31, 1979

   Each lab and center desiring a long-term special institutional relationship will apply to NIE, indicating whether it is modifying its 5-year plan.

3. At an appropriate point after the submission of each application

   NIE will evaluate each application after examining the Panel's recommendations and organizing a thorough review by Institute staff and appropriate outside reviewers.

4. After completion of each review

   NIE will determine the nature and duration of its relationship with each institution beyond Nov. 30, 1979.

See attachment 7 for the detailed timetable.

Selected Annotated Bibliography

1. Background Report on the "Labs and Centers." Prepared for the NCER, March 5, 1975, NIE, 16 pp.

   History of the labs and centers relative to Federal procurement policies.

2. Institutional Profiles of Education Laboratories & Research & Development Centers. NIE, Task Force on Labs & Centers, Sept. 1976, 439 pp.

   About 20 pages devoted to each of the 17 labs/centers, covering mission, governance, management, staff development, training provided to others, institutional relationships, funding history, facilities, current NIE and non-NIE projects. Completeness of entries is inconsistent.

3. Interim Report to the Director of NIE: Review of Long-Range Plans of the Educational Laboratories and the Research and Development Centers. The Panel for the Review of Laboratory and Center Operations, Jan. 20, 1978, 29 pp.

   Short report giving the Panel's general impressions of each of the 17 labs/centers with regard to: (1) relevance of missions proposed in their 5-year plans; (2) seeming ability of individual labs/centers to carry out their plans; (3) the appropriateness of labs/centers governance and management structures; and (4) the presence and seriousness of issues common to most of the labs/centers that need attention. A more in-depth review will be completed by Jan. 1, 1979.

4. Lab and Center 5-year Plans.

   Several volumes for each lab/center, describing their long-range plans. Submitted to NIE in the spring of 1977.

5. Lab and Center Proposals.

   Several volumes for each lab/center including an institutional overview, proposed projects, and resumes of staff. Submitted to NIE in April 1978 for 16 of the 17 institutions.

6. A Legislative History of the National Institute of Education. NIE, May 14, 1973.

   Legislative history, including House and Senate Bills, Conference Report, Congressional Record entries, the law, and the Presidential Statement, for P.L. 92-318. Also includes the text of the Oversight Hearing of the 93rd. Congress, Feb. 6, 1973.

7. Official Solicitation of Long-Range Plans from Labs and Centers. NIE, March 25, 1977.

   Includes legislative authorization for soliciting the plans, a definition of NIE's special relationship with labs/centers; a description of what should be included in the plans and how they would be reviewed; and a description of relevant NIE policies to be considered while preparing the plans.

8. R&D Funding Policies of the National Institute of Education: Review and Recommendations. Final Report of Consultants to the Director and the National Council on Educational Research, Aug. 1975, 109 pp.

   Called the "Campbell Report". Written in six sections covering the charge to the consultants; the role of R&D in improving education; present resources for education R&D; context for policy-making at NIE; policy directions at NIE; and conclusions and recommendations. The recommendations include discussion of the role of the labs/centers and a strong emphasis on the need for a detailed review of each institution.

9. Reauthorization of the National Institute of Education--1976. NIE, revised Nov. 1977.

   Legislative history for 1975-76 for P.L. 94-482.

10. The Regional Laboratory Connection; Improving Educational Practices through Systematic Research and Development. Executive Summary, by Larry McClure, N.W. Regional Educational Laboratory, June 1, 1977, 16 pp.

    Gives a brief summary of the full report of a study that examined the critical ingredients of regional educational labs, including a history of the labs, the elements (e.g. region, identity, etc.) of labs, and recommendations for new regional labs.

11. Report to the Congress; Educational Laboratory and Research and Development Center Programs Need to be Strengthened. Comptroller General of the U.S., /G.A.O./, Nov. 1973, 40 pp.

    Contains results of the GAO review for Congress of 5 labs and 3 centers in 1972-73. Contains recommendations and suggestions for improvement, particularly in regard to lab/center products and the evaluation and dissemination of those products.